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John H. Hagarty
of Toronto

A LEGEND OF MARATHON.

Λαίρετε νικῶμεν.

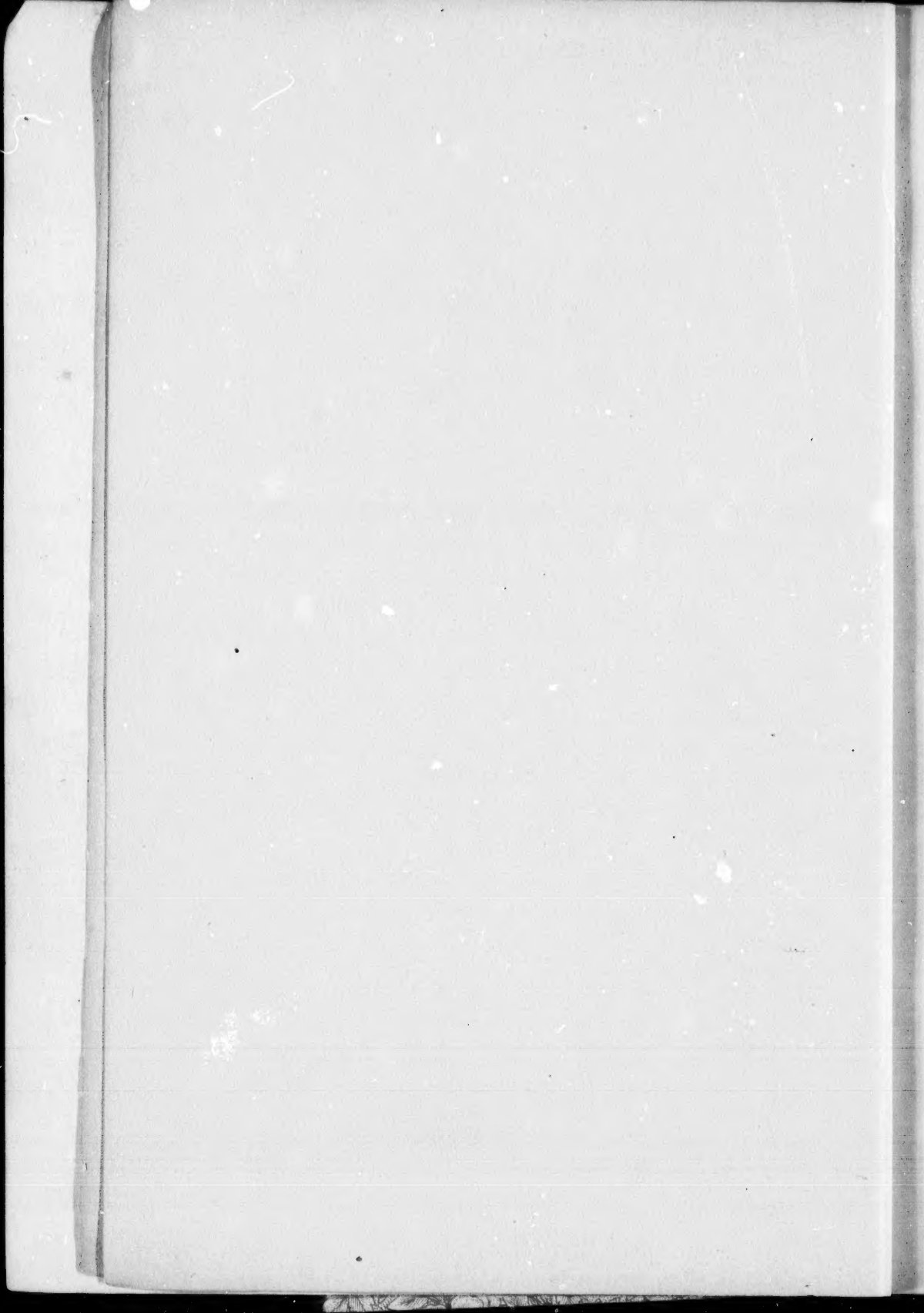
Am. John H. Hagarty
(Zadig) — Pseudonym

J. D. L.

MEMORANDUM.

A SEPTUAGENARIAN, afflicted in his youth with a verse making malady in an acute form, finds among his ancient rhyming diversions the following "Legend," which seemed to his partial judgment less worthy of cremation than the residue. It is to him a memory of the thoughts and dreams of "sweet three-and-twenty," and it is offered to the perusal of a few private friends.

The "Legend" is that of Eucles the soldier who, after being wounded in the battle, ran from Marathon to Athens (22 miles) and fell dead as he spake the words "Rejoice! we triumph!" (*Χαίρετε νικῶμεν*). He has probably viewed the architectural glory of Athens as of the age of Pericles rather than of Marathon.



A LEGEND OF MARATHON.

Χαίρετε νικῶμεν.

CITY of Gods! Upon thy storied brow,
Day's last magnificence is streaming now;
O'er earth and sea thy sunset glories weave
Their arch of splendour round the dying eve—
A violet flush upon Hymettus' steep,
A lingering crimson on Ægina's deep,
Thron'd in thy place of pride, the sunset's kiss
Fires thy white crest, shrine-crown'd Acropolis.—
The East grows dim, but round thy marbled height,
Yet floats the filmy crown of violet light,
The sunset charm—the air-born splendour given
To make thy lucid sky fit mask for heaven.

Faultless and pure, each shafted temple's crest
Sleeps on the violet air's pellucid breast—
Vision of beauty—born in poet's heart,
Shaped into life by old enchantment's art!
High above all in splendour soft and warm,
Looms the tall semblance of a martial form,
A warrior Phantom—Queen-like and alone,
The champion Goddess on her Attic throne;
The dying sun yet leaves one burning glance,
To flame upon her zenith-pointing lance
As in her grasp a lightning flash it glow'd—
So watch'd Athenæ o'er her loved abode!

The rose flush fades on eastern hill and stream
The earliest stars through twilight mantle gleam,
And the full summer moon hangs fair and still
On the far outline of Pentelic hill—

As if, in truth, the minstrel legend told
 The graceful fiction of the nights of old,
 How, mortal-like upon that sylvan brow,
 She paus'd to hear an earthly lover's vow.

Endymion! Endymion!
 High on the grassy peak of Latmus dreaming!
 The white moon bathes thy graceful form
 In radiance soft and warm—
 Orbing a beauteous shape of God-like seeming;
 Rouse thee to waking bliss!
 Thy fair lip woos the kiss
 Of Artemis!

White-orbed Artemis!
 Linger—oh, linger in thy beauty still
 On this green Attic hill—
 Latmus and Love await thee everywhere,
 When deepening twilight hails thy beauteous light,
 Silvering the eastern height.
 Aptest of hours for passion's vow and prayer,
 Love's legends sing no sweeter myth than this;
 Endymion—Artemis!

Half circled in the chestnut wood
 That round its flickering shadow flung,
 Just o'er Ilissus' starlit flood
 A light aerial fabric sprung—
 A mingled shape, half fane, half bower,
 Rose the fair structure's vernal grace—
 A spot where music, scent and flower
 Should greet the Genius of the place.
 In the rich moon light's calm repose—
 All beautiful the fabric rose
 Light as the filmy shade they flung,
 Graceful the snow-white columns sprung,

With sculptur'd base and fluted side
 Crown'd with acanthus' mimic pride --
 Round glistening freize and polished shaft
 A wilderness of roses laugh'd,
 Clasping the column's leafy crown --
 Flinging green tangled tresses down
 Till, buried in their glossy twine
 The eye half lost the flowery shrine.

No dread Olympian there would dwell
 Screen'd in the lowly greer wood shade,
 Where Love alone its vow would tell,

And flowers the only offerings made --
 Seem'd it the home of some kind Power
 Content to bide by stream and flower,
 Mayhap some Shape of wave or grove
 Some phantasy of youthful love
 Whose voice might haunt the lowly shrine
 Half fanciful -- but still divine --
 From singing fount and whispering trees : --
 Voicing Æolian harmonies --
 The Dryad glanc'd through green old wood
 The Naiad sprang from sparkling flood --
 Till forest mount and green recess
 Had each its haunting Loveliness.

The old Greek, dreaming in the shade
 Of bower, beside some limpid wave,
 Drank the sweet sounds its music made,
 As voice the local Genius gave --
 The cataract leap'd joyous down --
 The red bolt clove the thunder cloud --
 The tempest smote the forest crown --
 The mountain rose through misty shroud --
 Vision and Power and thunder sound
 Took Godhead's form and altar found.

It was a creed for Earth's fresh prime --
 Her Morning-land of young romance,

Tuneful with earliest Minstrel's rhyme—
 Flushed in her Sun-God's kindling glance—
 It was a web of earthly frame
 Lit by a Glory, downward given ;
 Its woof was Beauty, Valour, Fame—
 It's hues, what Poets dream'd of heaven.
 And kindling eye and bended knee
 Worship'd in rapt idolatry !

It was a creed of light and grace,
 Of soaring thought and strain sublime,
 Meet for an old heroic race,
 For dwellers in a sun-lit clime—
 It scattered o'er their glorious land
 Fair shrines, earth's fairer haunts to bless
 Where—graven by Art's immortal hand,
 Rose crown'd, each wandering Loveliness,
 And o'er truth's dazzled eyes it threw
 A fairy veil of golden hue.

Scorn not the fictions of the Past,
 Their erring votaries' vows and prayers,
 Their Heaven in earthly mould was cast,
 But Faith—impassion'd Faith—was theirs—
 O'er altar crushed—o'er ruined fane—
 Some heart of poet-mould might yearn,
 To hail the world's fresh youth again—
 Its Morningland of Faith return—
 The old fair dream—Life—flowers and smiles,
 And o'er Death's wave—the "Blessed Isles."

Now listen ! From the rustic shrine
 Low voices haunt the summer air ;
 Look through the veil of rose and vine ;
 Two half-seen forms are lingering there,
 Lingering beneath that flickering shade,
 With Night's soft veil their tryst to cover,
 Masking the blushes of the maid,
 The bright eye of the earnest lover.

Fair is the stripling's graceful mien,
 Half-soft—half-proud—his youthful form,
 And fair to lure the Altar's Queen
 With fire of earth her heart to warm—
 And she—a fitful moon ray now
 Robes her light form in snowy light ;
 She hath upturn'd a glowing brow
 To meet the watcher's ardent sight.
 Aye—Beauty's votary well to her
 May bend a raptur'd worshipper.

They sat within their pleasant bower,
 The starlit river sang below—
 And thoughts were theirs that golden hour,
 Which youth and hope alone can know ;
 Enough—they lov'd—our modern heart
 The same old touch of magic thrills—
 Sweet Love hath learn'd no fresher art
 Than that which blessed the Attic hills,
 And moon and vale and rippling river
 The same soft tale may hear forever.

But who the Maiden and the Youth ?
 Theirs' yet a tale of homely truth—
 The Maiden's sire long, long ago,
 When life was in its morning glow,
 Bade that light fane in beauty spring,
 To Love's sweet Queen, his offering—
 A fairer form was by his side ;
 A hearth delight—a new-made Bride ;
 Whose girlhood saw the Sun-God's smile
 Flash o'er her native Delian isle,
 In the blue zone of sparkling seas
 That clasps the sun bless'd Cyclades.
 She grew—she loved—young Mœon bore
 His bride to bless his Attic shore,
 And years flowed on—till dark to tell,
 On their fair home a shadow fell—

Her eye grew dim, her faint heart prayed
 To see once more the Delian shade.
 'Twas done—she trod her native glen,
 Kiss'd the old Altar stone again—
 Bent o'er her island mother's grave—
 Then bade farewell to vale and wave.
 Fresh blew the joyous breeze for home ;
 The galley cleft the Ægean foam,
 And o'er the wave at evening close
 On Sunium's steep white columns rose ;
 The autumn sun in lurid light
 Sank o'er Ægina's distant height.
 From Parnes' crest a cloudy plume
 Stream'd stern and threatening through the gloom ;
 Down from Cithæron's far off caves
 A wild blast lash'd the rising waves.
 Next morn the landsmen throng the shore,
 The Delian galley was no more !
 Down the sharp crags they search and found
 A form half senseless on the ground—
 Safe in his arms an infant smiled ;
 'Twas Mœon and his rescued child.
 Though home's sweet voice its welcome gave,
 His heart was 'neath the cruel wave.
 He lived to watch each summer ope
 The lonely blossom of his hope :
 Life's joys and fears her lot befel—
 The rest—the star-lit shrine may tell.

Who the fair youth ? Young Eucles' name ;
 Yet noteless in the roll of Fame.
 His sword yet kept its maiden blade
 Twin'd in the peaceful myrtle shade ;
 Yet sprung the Youth from noble race
 Of martial fame and lofty place ;
 Brave deeds and well won honors mark
 His stately sire, the Polemarch.*

* The War Archon.

High dreams were his—aspirings bold—
 Child of the old Athenian mould.
 The thoughtful brain, the high-puls'd heart,
 The slave of beauty's dazzling art —
 That watch'd the tinted clouds float by,
 O'er crystal wave or sunset sky,
 That watch'd the Satyr chase the Faun,
 The Dryad's footstep skim the lawn—
 That saw the graceful Naiad rise
 Through noonday fountain's rainbow dyes.
 The fading of eve's lingering light,
 The first star, tremulously bright,
 The noon-tide hush on forest bowers,
 The voice of streams—the breath of flowers.
 For him all earth and lucid heaven
 Seemed but for Beauty's worship given,
 But when the War-Bard's fiery lay
 Chas'd the soft dreams of peace away,
 O'er the bold notes his spirit heard
 The trumpet call—the charging word,
 And kindling heart and throbbing breath
 Ask'd Victor's crown or Honour's death !

Such are the Maiden and the Youth,
 Lift not sweet Night thy starry veil.
 Speak not— thou cold eyed prophet, Truth.
 Their love is yet a fairy tale—
 Vex not their dream of peace and rest—
 Their star is setting in the West !

* * * * *

War from the East ! The startling 'larum fills
 The fear-wing'd echoes of the Attic hills—
 From Thracian peak to Sparta's farthest cave
 Rings the dread tale—"the Persians on the wave !"
 Woe to Athenæ ! Dust on crown and shrine—
 The Gods frown dark on Cæcrops fated line !
 Last eve from Andros o'er the Ægean deep
 The watch beheld the Orient tempest sweep

And toward the Attic shore slow heaving on
Seek thy lone Bay—yet noteless Marathon—

Thou art awake ! bright spirit of the Free—
The old Greek's life—immortal Liberty !
The flame burns clear on thine eternal shrine,
The bold winds float thine ancient battle sign,
Flash up red beacon from the War-God's height—
Speak thy dread teachings to the ear of night—
From far Laconian Cape to Delphi's steep
O'er the brave land the martial summons sweep—
Age to the rampart—woman to the shrine—
The land's stern Manhood to the battle line !

* * * * *

Sun-set on Marathon !—The tinted Bay,
Heaves with the Persian war ships vast array—
O'er the green shore is pour'd the Orient flood
Chieftain and serf in glittering multitude,
Far up along the western barrier hills
A scanty band the mountain passes fills
There, watchful Athens, camps thy banded might
There thy last guardians wait the morrow's fight.

Slow sank the lingering beam—Ten thousand eyes
Watch'd with last glance how summer sunset dies.
On yon high rock behind the Greek array.
A soldier gazes at the parting day.
Far down the golden track a distant beam
May float, Ilissus, on thy darkening stream.
That pencill'd flush so tremulously fine
Must gild that happy spot—the lover's shrine.
Another hour, and soft eyed stars will hover
O'er that sweet haunt of loving maid and lover—
'Tis there—young Dreamer ! When thy faltering arm
May need the magic of some potent charm,
Then let Love's vision to thy memory come—
Then let the Persian feel, thou strik'st for home !

* * * * *

Night on the Attic hills!—
 Night on the darken'd West!
 Night of impending sorrow—brooding ills—
 Fears—hopes, and fierce unrest.
 The air is heavy with the moaning surge
 Gathering to thunder on the Ægean verge—
 Free homes and shrines—a Nation's upward Life
 Trembling upon the issues of the strife—
 Must Progress, Genius, Arts in matin glow,
 Sink in barbaric overflow?
 Freedom's fair realm in slavery's grasp down-press'd?
 Night on the darken'd West!

* *

Dawn on the Attic hills!
 The supreme hour draws nigh.
 Not thus the awakening World its weird fulfils—
 Not thus must Freedom die—
 Not thus the ripening harvest of free thought
 Be reaped and crush'd to naught—
 War's crimson annals wait their noblest name,
 Man's victory of holiest fame—
 Through fearless hearts the land's rich life blood thrills,
 Dawn on the Attic hills!

* * * * *

Hushed the lone Bay—save on the darken'd shore.
 Where waves sang faint in melancholy roar,
 Dark floods of shadow in the changeal sky,
 With Morn's far outposts battling silently;
 No warlike breathing stirr'd the quiet air,
 No trumpet told a world in arms was there,
 The Persian thousands on the sands were still,
 The Hope of Athens girt the distant hill.
 The Satrap slumber'd in his silken tent—
 The hardy Greek on grassy pillow bent—
 Far off on Rhamnæ's* shrine night's darkest cloud

* Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnæ or Rhamnos.

Hung 'neath the failing stars a giant shroud,
As there its awful Queen her wings unfurl'd,
Black Nemesis, the 'Venger of the World !

Look out ! Along Euboea's mountain height
Floats a cold stream of melancholy light—
Seaward it spreads. Gray Ocha's barren steep
Heaves its huge shape above the leaden deep.
The mists grow pale, the mountain's kindling pride
Strips the grey mantle from his giant side.
On ghostly peak, and o'er the waves dim blue,
Breathes the faint semblance of a warmer hue,
The first glad smile—as Eos' touch unbars
The gates of Morn to blind the failing stars—
Wake bird and flower, green Earth and Ocean's sweep,
The blush of Delos kindles o'er the deep !

Magnificently calm the silent Dawn
With pomp and state and flush comes journeying on,
Gorgeous and slow, like some high Glory's birth,
Its arch of splendour spans the dewy Earth ;
Rise from the wave ! Give earth another day,
To light her stormy annals—far away
Down the red waves of war—and when the strife
Grows dark for Freedom battling for her life,
Then shower thy blaze of Victory upon
Some glorious field like this—O Sun of Marathon !

The hour draws nigh, yet silence broods
On all those voiceless multitudes—
Those thousands on the wave—
Still sleeps yet noteless Marathon.
As if its gray hills watch'd alone
A solitary grave.

A trumpet on the crimson Dawn !
A hundred echoes hurrying on
The war-cry's wakening strain.
From yon hill fastness seems to rise

That burst of martial harmonies,
 Peak answering peak again !
 There, half reveal'd, a stern array
 Is arming for the battle day—
 Thy trumpet, Athens, rends the air
 Thy gallant host is gathering there—
 And mountain crest and crag and brake
 Bid their own slumbering echoes wake—
 To swell the glorious call ;
 Gray Rhamnæ's vengeance-shrining piles—
 Pentelicus, thy green defiles
 Answer exultant all !

High o'er the Athenians' silent bands
 Their Chief—a radiant Phantom—stands,
 Helm, cuirass, shield and falchion drawn
 Resplendent in the golden dawn—
 On yon low hillock's grassy mound.
 As Genius of the battle ground—
 A Glory, radiant from afar—
 Incarnate archetype of War—
 That dreaming Victors see !

Seems it some shape of old renown,
 The Pythian stoop'd from Delphi's crown ;
 The War-God from his hill come down

In Heaven's bright panoply !
 High o'er his glittering crest, above
 In the blue air the bird of Jove

Wheels on exulting wing—
 A shining star of flame, up borne
 In the rich golden light of morn,

He floats—that bold eyed King !
 High on a blue Thessalian peak
 He caught the pale morn's earliest streak,
 And hither wing'd his fiery way
 To watch how heroes strive to-day.
 Hark his shrill scream ! his sounding wheel,
 As revelling in the flash of steel,

His pæan rings on high !
 With beating hearts the warriors note
 The glorious omen o'er them float,
 And murmur " Victory ! "

The sunlight floods the golden sands
 Gods ! 'Tis a dread—a glorious sight—
 The wakening of the Persian bands,
 The Orient arming for the fight !
 List ! from the Satrap's glittering tent
 A mighty trumpet voice is sent
 And down the uprising lines, afar,
 Answers each brazen tongue of war.
 From fleet and camp the Persian pours
 His bright ranks on the sounding shores ;
 Wave upon wave—a sparkling flood
 A mail'd and banner'd multitude—
 Tribe after tribe—the hurrying lines
 Press where each Chieftain's standard shines :
 First Persia—thine " Immortals " band
 The veteran warriors of the land,
 The " Great King's " guards, triumphant rear
 The gold pomegranates on the spear *
 Next in array the gallant Mede
 Speeds to the front with martial speed :
 The Bactrian from his desert came
 With swarthy brow and glance of flame ;
 And Scythia from her forests pour'd
 The Sacæ's fierce and restless horde
 The Thracian came from Strymon's rills,
 Chaldea from her starlit hills,
 The Parthian fill'd his deadly quiver,
 With reeds that waved by Oxus' river—
 And Caspian lake and Euxine isles
 Pour'd to the war their savage files.
 There the Sagartian Shepherds band
 The lass' whirl with deadly hand

* See Herodotus.

Each vassal tribe its warriors sent,
From Cissian waste—from Arab tent—

Wild steed and wilder lord—
The Eastern world in arms !—to seek
On Attic soil the heroic Greek

The patriot's fearless sword !
Hush'd the vast host—no warlike sound
Breaks from the camp's extended bound.
Mark ! where yon sea-rock's barren steep
Looks eastward o'er the kindling deep—
Twelve radiant Shapes stand silent there
Like statues in the golden air,
Round each tall form a robe of snow
Floats with a fair and holy glow,
O'er each bowed head the myrtle's fold
Clasps the tiara's burnish'd gold—

Knowest thou, those ancient rites ?
No vaulted arch their praise confines,
Not theirs the pomp of labour'd shrines,
Their Sun-God boasts a nobler home
His own broad Heaven's illumin'd dome—

His shrines the mountain heights—
Green Earth and dawn-flush'd Sea—
Bold, the rude creed their Founder taught
From Reason's simple childhood caught ;
An erring Faith, yet half divine
Wandering from Truth's eternal line,

But scarce Idolatry !
Simple the rites —Each white stoled Priest
Stands gazing on the sun-flush'd East—
Whence radiant from his ocean Dawn—
Their glorious King comes journeying on.
Towards his bright car each hand lifts up
In the blue heaven the golden cup—
On high the rich libation's pour'd,
Their Flame-God's mounting orb's ador'd—
Sinks to the earth the mighty host
In breathless adoration lost—

And vows are breath'd and pray'r is said,
 The Guebre veils his cowering head,
 Till the dread rites are told—
 And the awed spirit feels that hour
 The influence of a present power
 His God, above him, rolled !

Rich sunlight on the upland wolds
 But o'er each gorge and shadowy pass
 A fresh spring mist of autumn folds
 The stern Athenian's gathering mass—
 Stirs the far foe? Ha! Scout draw near,
 Bend low to earth thy watchful ear—
 The Leader's call—the clash of mail—
 Break muffled from the filmy veil,
 Now one long shout—the grey mist round
 Waves, shuddering at the piercing sound—
 And all is still—Thy warning speak—
 "They come—they come, the Greek—the Greek!"

Up spring the bright ranks of the East!
 The vows are told—the rites have ceased—
 Room—room! The Satrap's golden car—
 Is flashing down the marshall'd war.
 From tribe to tribe the warnings flow,
 "Yon blue mist shrouds the charging foe!"
 "Mark its grey folds—a martial storm
 "Is gathering in that misty form!"
 It moves—Tall shapes of shadowy gloom,
 Seem tramping through its cloudy womb.
 Rings from its depths a sudden clash—
 Leaps to the sun a lance's flash—
 One moment more—the breeze hath toss'd
 The shroud aside that veil'd the host—
 Shield, cuirass, helm with sudden light
 Flash to the sun in blinding might—
 Ten thousand men, array'd for fight,
 Sweep o'er the brightening lawn ;

No trumpet breathes its stormy notes—
 No banner'd pomp above them floats—

So the stern Greek comes on !

They halt—one moment—cast around
 Brief survey of the battle ground—
 The next—their trumpet chorus peals—
 Swift into line the column wheels,

Down the long lances go ;

Forth to the winds their banners' given—

One fiery shout they ring to Heaven

Then burst upon the foe !

The thunder of the charging word
 Long, long the mountain echoes stirr'd,
 But ere its martial cadence fell—
 Fresh war-shouts burst to aid it well—
 Before the misty lawn he cross'd
 The bold Greek marshall'd forth his host—
 The left—Plateæ's stern array—
 Swept downward toward the northern bay,
 And grappled with a countless band
 From Lydian and Chaldean land.
 The fierce War-Archon led the right,
 Skirting the upland's lessening height—
 And by the eastern marsh's marge
 Burst on the Mede in stormy charge—
 Loud swells the battle chorus out,
 Answering the Centre's onset shout—

On burst the Centre's fierce advance
 With lower'd targe and levell'd lance —
 High o'er the ranks each warrior sees
 Thy glittering crest, Themistocles !
 (This field the nurse of thy renown—
 Blue Salamis thy triumph crown)
 That fearless war cry on the air
 Tells, Aristides combats there—
 No halt—no pause—the fiery van
 Leaps on the Persian man to man—

But ere on helm one falchion rung,
 Ere arrow sped, or javelin flung,
 From the front rank a warlike form
 Sprang—like the lightning from the storm,
 And clove with swift and deadly blow
 The foremost warrior of the foe—

Down the bright banner sinks !
 A wild shout from th' Athenian line,
 Brave Eucles, hails the deed as thine !

Thy blade the first blood drinks—
 The rush of Persia's charging host
 Makes answer to the vengeful boast
 As, fearless in their countless might
 They grapple in the desperate fight !

On Marathon the day was young
 When the first battle trumpet rung ;
 But noon received the westering sun
 Ere carnage stayed or fight was won.
 Long, long the Centre's stubborn strength
 Bore the fierce fight's exhausting length,
 On—on the Orient's warlike flood
 Press'd in exhaustless multitude.
 Till faintness seiz'd the thinn'd array—
 Tired wax'd the arm upraised to slay.

Stand fast for home ! The foes divide
 As parted by some rushing tide—
 They come ! the Cissians, Arabs, Medes.
 A deluge of impetuous steeds—
 High o'er their ranks the golden car
 Tells that the Satrap guides the war ;
 As bursting through the storm of fight,
 They dash on Athens' staggering might—
 Stand fast for home—Down lance and targe—
 Hurl back the Horsemen's foaming charge,
 Vain rallying shouts and Chief's appeals—
 The pierc'd and shatter'd column reels

And backward borne, retreating slow,
 Still turning fiercely on the foe,
 Till the rough upland slopes they gain
 Where crag and hillock break the plain—
 Broken by gorge and rocky knoll
 The eddyng tides of battle roll—
 There, back to back a desperate band
 Steadfast to death the foe withstand;
 Here a stern handfull flank'd by rock
 Repulse a charging thousand's shock—
 Rages in fiercer life, the fray,
 For life—for home—the Greek at bay!

Woe to the Virgin City now,
 Dust on Athenæ's ancient brow!
 Stern Pallas by her snow-white fane
 Hears her pale votaries prayer in vain—
 Unpitying Jove's dread bolt is still
 Red Mars is silent on his hill—
 Ilissus! let thy wailing flow
 Sing to the sea the dirge of woe—
 Woe to Athenæ, woe!

Sudden the headlong onsets stay,
 The roar of battle dies away—
 As, upward from the distant plain,
 Floats a far trumpets' warning strain—
 Then herald horsemen spurring fast
 With waving arm and bugle blast—
 Till down the plain retreating slow,
 Backward the reflux war-tides flow.

Instant as paused the assailing storm,
 The bold Greeks scatter'd ranks reform,
 Press to the front, and gaze afar
 Down the red landscape of the war—
 Glad vision theirs! Far down the plain
 Rings their own war-cry's kindling strain.
 Westward, Plataea's gallant ranks

Are charging home on Persia's flanks—
 Stern shouts are echoing from the right,
 Where the War Archon heads the fight—
 And mail and targe and tall war-horse
 Shrink from his charging spearmen's course.

With fresh-won strength—with hope new found
 The centre treads the battle ground,
 With sore-thinn'd ranks, still firm and bold,
 Down the red plain—the dead scarce cold—
 O'er slain and dying, friend and foe—
 The reffluent wave of war must flow ;
 Pause not, brave hearts, though comrade hands
 Are waved to greet your passing bands ;
 Though from the dying and the dead
 Some comrade lifts a fainting head ;
 And Life's last gladness lights the eye
 That sees your vengeful ranks sweep by ;
 Then sinking back to happy death ;
 Ye hear him gasp with latest breath
 A faint-voiced " Victory ! "

Before them gathering stern and fast
 At chieftain's call and trumpet blast
 The Orient's scattered lines unite
 To swell their centre's rallying might—
 The reffluent wave of broken ranks
 Streams inward from the vanquished flanks,
 Dust and gore on painted vest,
 Gay plume shorn from stately crest,
 Blood on point of standard lance—
 For pennon lit by sunbeam's glance—
 But bravely ranged in gallant show
 Their wall of steel confronts the foe.

Once more the war-flames leap to life—
 Once more they close in deadliest strife ;
 Sudden—some voice of fearful power
 Swells o'er the battle's stormiest hour.

There ! toward the right ! what echoes speak.—
 Mark there the tumult of the Greek !
 What startles their confus'd array,
 Shout they in triumph or dismay ?
 Now, all is hushed—the battle roar
 Breaks from the awe-struck ranks no more,
 The summer waves upon the shore
 Are almost heard to flow !
 Gods of our faith ! What awful Shade*
 Gigantic in the sunlight made,
 O'er silent hosts and ranks dismayed,
 Is floating stern and slow !
 Jove ! See yon temple on the height
 Hath oped its gates with hidden might,
 The westering Sun's declining light
 Streams through its ancient arch—
 And, flashing in that splendour warm,
 Armed as some God of War and Storm,
 Floats down a glorious Hero-Form
 In slow and stately march !
 The right arm wields a giant lance
 Bright with the living lightning's glance
 The splendour of his phantom shield
 Streams a fierce glory o'er the field—
 Round his proud helm the laurel crown
 Speaks of high deeds of old renown—
 Down to the Athenians awestruck band
 He moves a Phantom of Command—
 A Chief in panoply !
 Through the hush'd ranks, a low deep tone,
 From man to man is whispering thrown,
 "'Tis HE ! 'Tis HE ! the form divine.
 The sculptur'd Hero of the shrine—
 The God ! 'Tis HE ! 'Tis HE !
 Our Theseus from th' Olympian dome

* The old tradition of the appearance of the phantom of Theseus at Marathon.

Hath stoop'd to guard his ancient home.
 'Tis Theseus ! Victory !"

On floats the Shape toward Persia's host
 In blank amaze and horror lost—
 The giant lance, he poises slow
 Round it red lightnings stream and glow—
 As, wrathful at the shrinking foe,
 He hurls its terrors on !
 There was a blaze of blinding light
 A splendour, kindling plain and height—
 It pass'd—the war bands strain their sight—
 The Phantom Shape is gone !
 But thousands heard the distant fane,
 Close with a crash, its gates again—
 And ere the awful silence broke
 A glorious harmony awoke—
 A swell of triumph notes,
 As o'er the Athenians gladden'd bands.
 From harp strings swept by viewless hands,
 An Io Pæan floats !

There was silence fallen on that vast array,
 On the soldiers shout, on the war steed's neigh ;
 Lance and standard neglected hung
 Reins were slackened and bows unstrung,
 Till a voice from the Grecian centre broke—
 And it seem'd that a God in its passion spoke.
 " Arise ! Arise ! from the height of Heaven
 " There is aid sent down, there is victory given—
 " On Comrades on—in the path fresh trod
 " By your Hero's step, by your Warrior God !"
 From the rallied centre there burst a cry
 The conquering wings shout " Victory,"
 As the storm blast wakens the heaving seas,
 They sprang at the call of Miltiades !
 And burst on the foe in a charging flood—
 A tempest hurl'd on a crashing wood—

Vain, vain, the rush of the Cissian steed ;
 Vain the last hot charge of the gallant Mede—
 Where the mountain brook to the marsh enlarged,
 On the Parthian bows hath Platæa charged,
 And swept the ranks of the archers' pride
 To a grave in the shoals of its reedy tide ;
 The Lydian shrank from the reddening field ;
 Vain was the fence of the Chaldee shield,
 High in front of each charging band,
 The Battle Phantom yet seemed to stand—
 But the fight still raged where the Satrap's car
 Urged the faltering ranks to the front of war—
 Till a lance from the hand of young Cymon flew,
 Hurl'd to its mark, both strong and true—
 And the gallant Persian's bright crest sank down,
 And dust was strewn on the Satrap's crown !*

High to the Heavens, the patriot shout
 Of triumph, leaps exulting out !
 As o'er the plains confus'd and toss'd
 Breaks from its ranks the Orient host,
 With fear-wing'd limbs and pallid lips,
 Straining to gain the sheltering ships—
 Round the tall galleys raged the strife—
 One side for victory—one for life.
 On rushed the Greek with lighted brand
 To fire or stay with grappling hand ;
 High mounts the flame—the beaten host
 Sees the last hope of safety lost.
 For life—for life ! One desperate charge
 Clears the bold foeman from the marge
 Of wave and shore.

One stalwart form
 Stands wrestling with the warlike storm ;
 And loudest o'er that bloodiest close,
 Callimachus ! thy challenge rose.

A sound, remember'd well

* Artaphernes.

One hand arrests a galley's course,
 One smites the foe with trenchant force,
 A bright axe gleams in downward stroke—
 Yet once again the war-cry woke
 And died upon the failing breath,
 As droop'd the Hero's crest in death—
 So the War-Archon fell !

* * * * *

Far from the fight yon green hill's crest
 Bounds the fair prospect to the West—
 High o'er its wooded summit, winds
 The path the hunter's footstep finds.
 Treading the maze of swelling hills,
 The nursing fount of Attic rills.
 And severing from the eastern plains
 Fair Athens and her marbled fanes.
 And summer afternoon shines fair
 On stream and vale embosom'd there.
 Now up the green hill's steep ascent
 A soldier's rapid course is bent
 He halts, the topmost peak is won—
 He turns to gaze on Marathon—

Sunlit and glorious neath his earnest glance,
 Lie battle plain and Ocean's fair expanse—
 Fast from the fatal shore in hurried sweep,
 The Persian galleys seek the friendly deep,
 Up springs the vengeful flame from mast and deck
 Strown on the yellow sands lie spoil and wreck—
 O'er the red plains the roar of battle dies—
 Another strain on lighter echo flies—
 Soft on his ear the song of victory floats,
 In far magnificence of triumph's notes.
 He sees his comrades pile with eager hands,
 The glittering trophy on the bloody sands,
 He marks the spot where fell that joyous morn
 The royal flag the Cissian Chief had borne,

His arm struck there !

Is it the sunflush'd sky,
That lends its flame to fire his kindling eye ?
So proud the glance through toil and wound reveal'd,
The Soldier gazing on his first, last field.
What meets the strife-worn stripling's raptur'd gaze ?
Earth—Sea—in Victory's splendour all ablaze !
The rush of battle surges through his brain—
The charging shout—the clash of steel again.
Transfigur'd in the flush of glorious light,
The immortal vision fires his dazzled sight,
Seems it—through luminous Heaven arm'd Phantoms
throng,

His home's grand Heroes told in myth and song—
Gathering in warlike pomp of lance and shield,
The Past's proud homage to earth's noblest field :
Flood the fair scene with light, O westering Sun !
Flash o'er the ransom'd west that Marathon is won !

* * * * *

Once more on Athens fades the eve's soft light
The violet crown is on each guardian height—
The graceful city round its marbled hill
Clings as a sleeping child caress'd and still—
Far off, the waters of the tinted sea
Sing to the sunset flush'd and tremulously,
With isle and rock and ocean's crimson heave
Steep'd in the beauty of the closing eve.
Just where the hunter's path first halts to greet
The landscape gleaming round the green hill's feet,
A gazer stands—Look on him ; yes 'tis he,
The herald with the tale of Victory !
Why halts he there ? While in the vale beneath
Ten thousand hearts dream of despair and death.
On—on ! Alas, the Herald's eye is dim,
The weight of toil drags down each languid limb,
The scarce dried blood that stains the stripling's breast
Tells its own tale—and wearying miles the rest ;

He looks around on ocean, earth and sky
 With panting heart and wild, despairing eye—
 And as the shades of anguish close around
 He staggers—faints upon the rocky ground.

Death strikes not yet—'Tis past that death-like trance ;
 The wearied eye glares round with fearful glance
 O'er home's sweet vision—o'er each well-known spot,
 Broods the crush'd heart in agonizing thought—
 Bitter to die ! One hope upheld his strength,
 Through tangled wood, through vale of wearying length
 That first to loving heart should Eucles' voice
 Shout the glad tidings, "Victory ! Rejoice !" ²
 Well had he fought, till triumph's shout rang high,
 Left his dead sire in war's red pomp to lie,
 And now—the last height won—here crushed he lies
 With home's sweet vision 'neath his dying eyes.

Up from the quiet vale a murmur floats —
 A softened harmony of mournful notes—
 Aye, listen ! From thy home's white altars rise
 A solemn strain of tuneful harmonies—
 There gray-haired sire, weak child and pallid maid
 Bow'd to the earth are wearying Heaven for aid ;
 May not the air-born chorus reach thine ear ?
 With startling power to thrill, "Hear, Pallas, hear !" ³
 Hath thy quick fancy in that far off pray'r
 Heard *one* familiar voice lamenting there ?
 One voice—the soul of many a love-lit, dream
 When starlight slept upon Ilissus' stream.
 On that dear heart must doubt and sorrow lie
 With the glad tale of victory so nigh ?
 Up soldier, up ! the goal is all but won,
 Then if the brave heart break—its task is done !

Gloom on Athenæ ! as the eve sinks down
 Like earth's last sunset o'er the mourning town,
 And tear-dimm'd eyes pursue the failing light.
 With glance prophetic of a fearful night.

A last faint radiance lights the distant surge
 That moans around Ægina's holy verge,
 And eastward, o'er Hymettus' crest afar
 Melts the soft splendour of the earliest star.
 Daughter of Jove—look down—earth's fairest hour
 Robes thy white fane with beauty's holiest power.
 Look on thy Attic home ! to greet thee there
 Wait gift and vow, and agony of prayer.
 Now on Hope's waxen wings, the accents rise,
 Now, in a wail the strain despairing dies !

A sound upon the torpid street !
 A hurried sound of coming feet
 By Diomea's gate the scout
 Breaks the long silence with a shout
 That echoes round with startling might.
 "He comes ! a Herald from the fight !"
 He comes—He comes. Now Life and Death
 Hang on the Herald's earliest breath !
 He comes—he comes—his weary feet
 Slow bear him up the sacred street
 Toward the crown'd Virgin's altar place
 He staggers on with faltering pace—
 "Tis Eucles ! Eucles !" onward flies
 The glance of recognizing eyes.
 No voice the dreadful silence breaks
 No eager lip the question speaks—
 They mark the blood upon his breast—
 The wounded feet—the sullied vest,
 The flowing locks all bare—
 The wildness of the blood-shot eye—
 Gods ! Doth it fire with victory
 Or burns it with despair ?
 See ! from the distant battle field
 He carries home his dinted shield.
 Soft—now his path is stay'd ;
 By the white shrine the Herald stands,
 To Heaven are rais'd his weary hands

As asking strength and aid—
 Listen ! He speaks ! The crowd around
 Watch, as with madness for the sound—
 He gasps, the pallid lips have stirred,
 No ear hath caught the faltering word—
 The red blood to his ghastly brow
 Rushes with sudden fierceness now ;

Up from the faint heart roll'd.
 Now, to the violet heaven's expanse
 Turns wild his eye's despairing glance,
 As to reproach the cruel Power
 That bids him die this awful hour—

His glorious tale untold !
 Hark ! From the throng a low, deep moan
 Spreads o'er the hush its thrilling tone—
 Yon white form, cold and trembling there
 Hath waked that whisper of despair,
 And see—the Herald's straining eye
 Fires at the sound half maddeningly—

And then, a new found voice
 From the tired life's last effort wakes—
 Though in the strife the brave heart breaks,
 " Victory ! Rejoice ! Rejoice ! "

Peace joyous crowds !

There is a death-bed here—
 Let softer voices sooth the dying ear—
 Come gently round with light and solemn tread,
 There the boy-soldier droops his graceful head—
 Mark the white lip—the dark eye glazed and dim ;
 Youth, valour, hope are passing there with him—
 Not in the storm of fight when shouts rang high,
 And banners gleam'd and charging spears swept by,
 Fails that bright spirit—

Yet his fight is won.
 His country saved—his task of love is done,
 And loving hands his early death-bed tend,
 And home's kind eyes above his pillow bend ;

Strike light, O, Death !

There is a white form now
 Kissing the death-damp from the pallid brow,
 Propping with tender arm the drooping head,
 Wooing the last sweet light the dim eyes shed,
 Whispering sweet words—such as Ilissus' tide
 Heard nightly by the flower-crowned altar's side.
 Earnest to wake with love's impassion'd breath,
 Some lingering echo in the ear of death.
 A chord is touched—and with some transient might
 The eye's last warmth of evanescent light
 Shines forth, and fades,—and as the eternal trance
 Chills the faint heart and clouds the adoring glance
 Slow on the white arm droops the youthful head,
 The soldier sleeps—the living clasps the dead !

BY THE GRAVE

YOUTHS.

Trumpet and pæan swell !
 Bring shield and casque and spear ;
 Let the voice of all martial emblems tell,
 A soldier sleepeth here !
 Rear the white column high ;
 Hang up the laurel crown !
 Let our comrade's form as a victor lie
 In the light of his fresh renown !

MAIDENS.

Scatter bright offerings round,
 Strew flowers—green bud, fresh blossom

Let thy tired child sleep sound,
 Kind Earth, on thy mother's bosom—
 How he toiled on his homeward quest—
 How he died as his tale was spoken—
 He is weary ; O, let him rest—
 His long, deep sleep unbroken !

YOUTHS.

Bear the lost soldier home !
 He a softer grave has won,
 And a softer dirge than the requiem surge
 That moans round Marathon—
 Our slain three hundred sleep
 On the glorious field they won—
 Their Hero-Sires high vigil keep,
 O'er the grave of each Hero-Son !

MAIDENS.

Our woman's tears flow on—
 Our hearts the memory keeping—
 Of him, who thought when the fight was won
 Of those in the far homes, weeping !
 Like light was thy path on earth,
 Like light hath thy sweet life parted !
 There's a love link broken—a sadden'd hearth,
 And a wail for the faithful hearted !
 Farewell !
 Forget not the faithful hearted !

YOUTHS.

“ Victory ! Rejoice, Rejoice ! ”
 We will carve the legend well—
 From the tall white shaft its potent voice
 The glorious tale sha'll tell !
 Of the Soldier's might in the famous fight,
 Of the Herald's race well run—
 When rolls like fire from the War-Bard's lyre
 Thy story—Marathon !

* * * * *

'Tis spring time on the Attic hills,
 The snows have left Cithæron's crest—
 Green vales the vernal beauty fills,
 Soft winds breathe fragrance from the west.
 Hymettus, on thy spangled fields,
 The wild bees suck thy honied thyme,
 And shower of bud and blossom yields
 Rich hope for Summer's golden prime—
 And fair Athenæ's violet crown
 Floats o'er her hills as Day sinks down.

Ilissus, by thy freshen'd stream,
 Fair springs the Lover's rustic shrine—
 We see the snowy marbles gleam
 Through the soft veil of rose and vine.
 Sweet voices haunt the joyous air.
 From hidden fount or thicket given
 The same broad wealth of flowers is there,
 The flickering wood, the lucid Heaven
 The Goddess by her graceful fane,
 Seems apt for Lover's vows again.

Close by the Altar's outer bound
 Within the shade that evening flings,
 Co-tenant of the sacred ground
 A solitary column springs—
 Fair the white marbles glistening hue,
 Th' inverted torch, the sculptur'd base,
 The amaranth blooms, all mark too true
 The spot, a mortal's resting place—
 Where scent and flower with living breath
 Float o'er the silent home of death—

And still when Morning lights the wave
 Or Eve shines fair on Attic bowers.
 A watcher haunts the lonely grave,
 To smooth the turf or tend the flowers.

No fairy hand, no Dryad's form
 That task of gentle duty plies,
 A heart with human pity warm,
 There yield's Love's latest sacrifice.
 And soft eyes wear the sadden'd gleam,
 That lights lost love's memorial dream.

Sweet sounds are round the Maiden now
 Beneath the wave is dancing clear,
 The fresh winds fan her placid brow,
 The fountain's music haunts her ear,
 And still her gaze the column seeks,
 To commune with the phantom voice,
 That from the letter'd tablet speaks
 Its legend "Victory, Rejoice!"
 And thoughts to mortal guess unknown,
 Wakes in her heart that spirit tone.

Now look again. 'Tis holy night—
 The maid her lonely vigil keeps
 When flowers are clos'd and stars soft light
 Upon the crystal river sleeps,
 And Fancy calls from stream and grove
 Shapes such as mourning eyes behold;
 And memory sings to listening love
 Music of lips long mute and cold;
 Murmuring over the happy tale
 That bless'd so oft that starlit vale.

Years fled on—the land was dark,
 The Persian swept the Attic hills,
 And thousands throng'd the flyers' bark
 And wail the mourning Athens fills.
 The eve before the woful flight
 A scant and melancholy train
 With dirge and wreath and funeral rite
 Came sadly to the rustic fane:

A maiden's dust to earth they bare,
Her heart for years had rested there.

The flowers were strewn, the farewell said—

Next day the bitter flight was done—

And dust was on Athenæ's head

Till Salamis and home were won.

And still when Marathon's proud tale

Triumphant from the lyre-string swept—

A softer cadence named the vale,

Where Eucles and the Maiden slept,

And loyal hearts a blessing gave

To those who filled that quiet grave !

THE END.